

**CITY OF HAMILTON**

**PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**  
**Economic Development Division**

<b>TO:</b> Mayor and Members General Issues Committee	<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b> CITY WIDE
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b> March 21, 2012	
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b> Business Appreciation Program (City Wide) (PED12042)	
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b> Tim McCabe General Manager Planning and Economic Development Department	<b>PREPARED BY:</b> Neil Everson 905-546-2424 x2359
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- (a) That Report PED12042, respecting the Business Appreciation Program, be received;
- (b) That the Proposed Business Appreciation Program, as presented in the ***“Analysis/Rationale for Recommendation”*** section of Report PED12042, be approved; and,
- (c) That the Economic Development Division be authorized and directed to commence implementation of the Business Appreciation Program.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

When City Council directed staff to focus economic development efforts on job creation and non-residential assessment growth, they did so knowing that these objectives were the best strategy to solve the financial and poverty issues confronting Hamilton.

Over the last four years, the City of Hamilton has enjoyed consistently strong growth and economic development success. Although City Council and staff deserve to be acknowledged for their investment and leadership in economic development, these results must be largely attributed to the local business community that has made the investment in equipment, plant and people. These investments, along with their commitment to this community, often are not properly recognized by the City of Hamilton. This Report outlines a Business Appreciation Program and seeks authorization to commence implementation immediately.

***Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 4***

**FINANCIAL / STAFFING / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS** (for Recommendation(s) only)

**Financial:** Any program expenditures can be accommodated within the existing operating budget of the Economic Development Division.

**Staffing:** Existing staff complement in Economic Development Division can accommodate this new program.

**Legal:** None

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND** (Chronology of events)

In the early 1990s, the Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth's Economic Development Department ran an annual Business Appreciation Day event. This event was essentially a gala reception with a few remarks of appreciation from the Regional Chairman and the Chair of the Economic Development Standing Committee to the businesses in attendance. The event was well attended but did little to actually recognize and "appreciate" the contributions of individual businesses, both small and large, to the community. In addition, the cost of the program was harshly criticized by local businesses at a time when they were subject to significant property tax increases. The program was discontinued in 1996 with the departure of the then Manager of Business Development.

Since 1996, with the possible exception of the local Chambers of Commerce Outstanding Business Achievement Awards, there has been no Business Appreciation program in Hamilton. In September 2008, a Business Ambassador Program was launched by the Jobs Prosperity Collaborative (JPC). This program did not recognize businesses for their contribution to the City but, instead, enlisted them as "lead" generators and promoters of the City as a place to locate and grow a business. The Business Ambassador Program has not been active in the past several years.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Not applicable

**RELEVANT CONSULTATION**

- Mayor and Ward 5 Councillor
- Business Development Section Management Team
- Corporate Services Department – Clerk’s Division
- Legal Services Division
- Review of best practices from other Canadian municipalities (See Appendix “A”)

**ANALYSIS / RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION**

(include Performance Measurement/Benchmarking Data, if applicable)

The Economic Development Division has been wrestling with the most efficient and cost effective means to reintroduce a Business Ambassador initiative and some form of Business Appreciation Program for the City of Hamilton. Based on discussions in early 2012 with Councillor Chad Collins and his consultation with other members of Council, the need for a City-wide Business Appreciation Program was confirmed. Both the Councillor and Economic Development staff were in agreement that the fundamental objective of the program was to express City Council’s appreciation to local businesses that generate employment and non-residential taxes, and that this could be delivered with the expenditure of very few financial and staff resources.

It was also agreed that this program had to be simple, yet structured, in such a fashion that it was fair and transparent. Consequently, the following criteria have been developed and are recommended for approval by Council:

**Proposed Business Appreciation Program**

***Basic Criteria:***

- The business must reside within the municipal boundaries of the City of Hamilton and possess a municipal address (home based businesses are deemed ineligible)
- It must be a private sector business (not-for-profit enterprises are deemed ineligible)
- There is no restriction on the form of business organization (i.e. sole proprietorship, limited company, incorporated company)
- The business must be in operation for a minimum of five (5) years
- It must employ a minimum of five (5) employees
- The business cannot be in tax arrears (municipal)

- The business needs to demonstrate a unique accomplishment in:
  - # of years in business
  - Growth/expansion of the business
  - Job creation
  - Innovation and/or Research
  - Recognition provincially, nationally and/or internationally
  - Contribution to the community

***Determination of the Businesses:***

- Each Councillor is permitted to nominate two businesses per year in their Ward (preferably one small business and one medium/large sized business)
- The Mayor is permitted to nominate two businesses per year on a City-wide basis
- The companies will be identified jointly by the Ward Councillor and staff of the Economic Development Division. Recommendations from City staff will be generated through the Corporate Calling Program.

***Appreciation of Businesses:***

- Recognized at commencement of General Issues Committee by Committee Chair, Mayor and respective Ward Councillor
- Certificate of Appreciation signed by the Mayor and respective Ward Councillor
- Company profile on Economic Development Division's "Invest in Hamilton" website for two weeks or until next General Issues Committee meeting
- Year end acknowledgement referencing all recipients recognized in the year in the Hamilton Spectator

In researching other municipalities/cities in Canada and the United States, very few have a business appreciation program. This seems to be an initiative that is led primarily by Chambers of Commerce. Appendix "A" to this Report identifies some of the cities that do have an active program and what they specifically deliver.

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:**

(include Financial, Staffing, Legal and Policy Implications and pros and cons for each alternative)

That the proposed Business Appreciation Program not be implemented.

**Financial:** None

**Staffing:** None

**Legal:** None

**CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN (Linkage to Desired End Results)**

Focus Areas: 1. Skilled, Innovative and Respectful Organization, 2. Financial Sustainability, 3. Intergovernmental Relationships, 4. Growing Our Economy, 5. Social Development, 6. Environmental Stewardship, 7. Healthy Community

***Growing Our Economy -***

- ◆ Recognition of job creation and non-residential assessment component
- ◆ Business retention and expansion benefits

**APPENDICES / SCHEDULES**

Appendix "A" - Other Municipal Business Appreciation Programs

NCE/dkm

**Other Municipal Business Appreciation Programs:**

***Independence, Missouri:***

The Mayor's Business Appreciation Program is a monthly program recognizing the significant contributions Independence businesses make to the local economy by providing jobs and increasing the economic vitality of the community.

Each month the Mayor, the City Council, Independence Council for Economic Development (ICED) and City staff honor a selected company. This provides an opportunity for the Mayor, members of the City Council and staff to meet Independence business leaders and the employees that make their businesses run.

***HANOVER COUNTY, VIRGINIA***

***Business Appreciation Week: May 11-17, 2008***

Every May, the Commonwealth of Virginia recognizes the contributions that businesses of all sizes make to Virginia and the localities in which they operate. Business Appreciation Week will be May 11-17, 2008, and the state, towns, cities and counties will celebrate the impact that the business community has on the local economy. Hanover County Economic Development will host its 9th Business Appreciation event:

***CHATHAM-KENT BUSINESS APPRECIATION DINNER***

The Municipality of Chatham-Kent's Ontario Works Division and Economic Development Services host the event. This event was first originated in 2003, when business people from all areas of Chatham-Kent were brought together at the Lambton-Kent Memorial Community Centre in Dresden for a special evening of fine food, networking, employer awards and to hear Brian Tobin, former Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, give a keynote address.

***Westminster, Colorado:***

The City of Westminster acknowledges its business community at the annual Business Appreciation Event & Expo. The event offers networking opportunities at the Business Expo, which features exhibits of Westminster businesses, produces and services. There is a lunch program with a keynote address and includes an awards presentation to recognize those companies that have made a long-term investment in Westminster.